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St. A. Memo.

CONFIRMATION

A SERMON,

BY THE

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RECTOR OF WOODSTOCK, CANADA.

"LAYING ON OF HANDS."—*Heb. vi. 2.*

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WOOD-BLOCK

TO THE HONORABLE, AND RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD
JOHN,

(By Divine Permission)

LORD BISHOP OF TORONTO.

THE following Sermon, as an humble tribute of gratitude for the devotion
and zeal exhibited by His Lordship, in the maintenance of the Doctrines and Ordinances
of our Reformed Branch of CHRIST'S Catholic Church, is respectfully dedicated

WILLIAM BETTRIDGE.

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CONFIRMATION.

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"LAYING ON OF HANDS."—HEB. VI. 2.  
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Having received official notification from the Bishop of the Diocese, that he proposes, during the course of the summer, holding a Confirmation in this Church, of which of this Town and neighbourhood, I conceive I shall best contribute to the preparation for receiving, or witnessing this holy ordinance, by a brief exposition of the authority upon which the observance of this rite rests; by a plain statement of the design contemplated by the Church in its use and continuance; and by a simple instruction of the *means* whereby the candidates may attain a meetness for this sacrament. I have principally in view the propriety of giving to the candidates a full and general understanding of the nature of the ordinance before they present themselves for private examination; but in addressing you from the pulpit on the subject, I am desirous, that those persons, who, from ignorance or prejudice, think lightly of the office, and who, under the influence of such schismatical feelings, have hitherto refused obedience to the distinct injunctions of the Church, may have an opportunity of examining their objections by the light of truth, and be induced to cultivate a new spirit, and follow the suggestions of an obediential spirit. I am, moreover, anxious to interest you all in this work of faith and labour of love. We ask, because we need, you to pray for us,—that your Minister may have grace faithfully and zealously to discharge his duty in preparing the candidates, and that *they* may receive with meekness the instructions given, so that in the "laying on of hands" by the chief pastor of the Church, the Holy Ghost may descend in the rich plenitude of His grace to confirm and strengthen them, and settle them and us, in our most holy faith.

We proceed,

1st. To enquire upon what authority this ordinance of Confirmation rests.

2nd. To unfold the design of the Church in its use.

3rd. To suggest the preparation necessary for a due participation in this sacred rite.

1st. We trust to be enabled to show from Sacred Scriptures,—the practice of the primitive Church,—and the positive injunctions of our own, that the authority for the ordinance is abundantly sufficient to bind the conscience, and influence the conduct of every right-minded Christian. The first scriptural authority we adduce, is the text "laying on of hands." The Apostle distinctly asserts that this was one of the principles of the doctrine of Christ. It could not, as we shall show, refer to the ordination of ministers. The very order in which it stands, must also indicate that it *succeeded* the Sacrament of Baptism. There is, moreover, no intimation, that the service of "laying on of hands" was a transitory one, or less permanent, in its nature, than faith, repentance, or baptism. Its continuance in the Church is thus clearly required. We may now turn to other passages of Sacred Scripture to show

cers of the Church,—the Apostles themselves. I refer you to Acts viii, 15—
 a learn, beyond doubt, that this service *succeeded*, and was distinct from, bapti-
 (v.) which had been ministered unto the people by Philip. The Apostles
 perform that service, which Philip had no authority, indeed no power to do.—
 ve the order of events:—Philip preaches successfully the Gospel to the Samaritans,
 baptizes them, men and women; intelligence arrives in Jerusalem; the Apo-
 send two of their body, Peter and John, down to Samaria—for what object?
 preach the gospel—that Philip had done; not to baptize—that Philip
 re; not to ordain, for there were *women* as well as men,—but to c-
 n the disciples in their faith, by prayer for the Holy Ghost and by imposi-
 hands. It is not said that the Apostles *gave* the Holy Ghost—
 ild only do that which the chief pastors can now do, they prayed for them,
 ing prayed, they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.
 y be said, but the assertion is utterly incapable of proof, that the Apostles sou-
 y for the *miraculous* influences of the Holy Ghost for these people. I now
 ether from this single occurrence, the Church of England is not abundantly
 rized to continue an ordinance, the foundation of which is so manifestly resting
 word of God? Are we not also justified in our conclusion, that the w-
 urch of Christ even in the Apostles' days observed this ordinance? It is unde-
 e that the Apostles Peter and John did; and if they did, the other Apostles,
 re at Jerusalem, and who sent Peter and John, must have approved and ad-
 s service. It is true we have no record of their *all* having done so, but surely
 sufficient, that they deliberately did it once by chosen members of their body.—
 ostle Paul also, as you will immediately hear, adopted the same service, and
 ables at the suggestion of the Eternal Spirit, thus indicating to us, that it was
 ntinue an ordinance in the Church of Christ for ever. We now refer you
 ts xix, 5—6, --Paul having preached to the Ephesians, caused them to be ba-
 l; we say *caused* them to be baptized, for his custom was not to baptize; the
 otions to this custom he has left on record; the disciples at Ephesus are not in-
 mber of exceptions. After the baptism,—how long after is not stated, we kn-
 ly from the context, that Paul preached boldly in the synagogue for three mon-
 d then for two years daily in the school of one Tyrannus;—after the bap-
 ul laid his hands upon them, and the Holy Ghost came on them. Paul had
 wer to give the Holy Spirit: like Peter therefore he prayed—his prayer
 sswered. The question now most naturally occurs: are the chief pastors of
 urch, successors of the Apostles, enjoined by any command or even intima-
 abandon this principle of the doctrine of Christ, this praying for the Holy G-
 d “laying on of hands” on the disciples of Christ? Or have we any, the slight-
 rrant to suppose that prayer and imposition of hands will be less efficacious
 an in the days of the Apostles? The Apostle declares that repentance, ba-
 ptism, and laying on of hands are among the principles of the doctrine of Ch-
 long to the foundation: where is the intimation that any of those principles are
 ide? They are all, one and all, faith as repentance, baptism as faith, laying
 hands as baptism, means to an end, that is, that the christian, through the belie-
 e of ALL may go on, as the Apostle says, to *perfection*! It is undeniable
 ese disciples did, through the prayer and “laying on of hands” of the Apostles

pastors of the Church, become partakers of an inestimable blessing, even as a measure of the gift of the Holy Ghost, to which, without the use of the sacrament, they would have remained strangers, unless indeed we suppose that they were guilty of an useless form or ceremony; for which supposition we have no foundation as the enemies of *Confirmation* in the present day. But I am continually asked where is the word *Confirmation* found in the Sacred Scripture? In the sense we use the word? We answer 'tis not the word, but the thing signified by the word which we insist on; that is, prayer and "laying on of hands" by the chief pastor or Bishop of the Church, in order that the true disciples of Jesus may receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. This we do find in Scripture, and this is the sense of our authority for *Confirmation*. We might also say, that if Christians were permitted to use only such words as are found in Sacred Scripture, they might as well speak of the Sacrament of Baptism, or the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as the word Sacrament does not once occur in all the Bible. We must also observe that the word "Trinity"; it is not found in Scripture; but where is the *Christ* who denies the *doctrine* conveyed by the word?

Again, the primitive Church and ancient authors afford abundant authority for our practice. To doubt of the fact that *Confirmation*, in our sense of the word, was universally observed in the primitive Church, would be unreasonable as to doubt of the universal practice of Infant Baptism. We content ourselves, therefore, with a few quotations from writers of undoubted character and authority. Tertullian, a presbyter of the Church of Carthage, was born only about 60 years after the death of the Apostle John, very minute records the practice of the primitive Church. In his celebrated treatise on baptism, he says, "After baptism succeeds laying on of hands, by prayer, calling on the Holy Spirit." Again St. Cyprian, who was Bishop of Carthage about 28 years after the death of Tertullian, has left this remarkable declaration on the conversion of the Samaritans, as given already from the Acts of the Apostles. "The same thing (says he) is practised among us, that they, who are baptized in the Church, are presented to the Governors of it, that, by our prayers and laying on of hands, they may obtain the Holy Ghost, and be perfected with the gift of Christ;" in other words that they may, by confirmation, attain to the highest perfection of Christians. Again St. Jerome who was born in Pannonia in the year 330, and died in 420 (90 years old) in his discourse against Lucifer, and speaking of Confirmation, says, "If you ask where it is written? It is written in the Acts of the Apostles, if there were no authority of Sacred Scripture for it, yet the consent of all the Church upon this particular is instead of a command." Any reference to later writers on the Christian Church will be unnecessary, as it is conceded that, long before the Council of Trent, confirmation (as understood by the Church of England) was universally practised. I would simply observe, in passing, that the celebrated John Calvin, the author and founder of Presbyterianism, declares in his Institutes of the Christian Religion, "the laying on of hands"—evidently shows that *Confirmation* is a practice instituted by the Apostles.

We shall now briefly adduce the injunctions of our Church on the subject. In the 60th Canon we read "It hath been a solemn, ancient

audable custom, continued from the Apostles' time, that all Bishops lay their hands upon children, baptized and instructed in the Catechism of Christian religion, praying over them and blessing them." In the baptismal rite this injunction is laid on the sureties—"Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the ten Commandments, in the vulgar tongue, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose." In the office for baptism of adults, or such as are of riper years, it is said, "It is expedient that every person, thus baptized, should be confirmed by the Bishop, so soon after his baptism as conveniently may be, that so he may be admitted to the Holy Communion at the end of the Catechism, which is called by the Church "an instruction to be given of every person before he be brought to be confirmed by the Bishop," and when it is given, "so soon as children are come to a competent age, and can say in their own tongue the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and can give answer to the other questions of this short Catechism, they shall be brought to the Bishop, and every one shall have a Godfather or Godmother as a witness of their confirmation. And whensoever the Bishop shall give knowledge for children to be brought unto him for Confirmation, the Curate of every Parish shall either bring them in writing, with his hand subscribed thereunto, the names of all such persons as in his Parish as *he shall think fit* to be presented to the Bishop to be confirmed; or if the Bishop approve of them, he shall confirm them in the appointed manner. And in the service for Confirmation, it is peremptorily ordered "There shall be none admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed."

Such is the authority upon which this ordinance of Confirmation rests, and is grounded on Sacred Scripture—the practice of the primitive Church, and the position of our own.—And here I might take my stand, and appeal to every candid and impartial mind, whether sufficient proof has not been adduced, to warrant the continuance of this Holy Rite, but to convict of negligence and presumption, those who slight and abandon its observance? Where is the humble teachable Christian, who would venture to set at nought, to trample under foot, a authority, or to place his own feeble judgment in opposition to the voice of Scripture, antiquity, and the Church of God? It must not, however, excite our surprise, altho' it may our pity and regret, if we see many who are "wise in their own conceits," and above "that which is written" on the subject of confirmation, while multitudes in this professedly Christian country continue disobedient to their Saviour's command to partake of the Holy Communion of His Supper, in remembrance of Him, and not a few, alas, reject the solemn sacrament of Christ's Baptism, apparently saying "peace, peace," while Christ himself declares that we cannot be his disciples unless we can have no part nor lot in his salvation, unless we are baptized in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and thus received into covenant relation with Him.

I proceed now, secondly, to unfold the design of the Church in the ordinance of Confirmation.

Bishops and the limits of a sermon must necessarily preclude the full development of the Catechism of of "laying on of hands," or Confirmation. We shall, therefore, endeavour to select those parts of the great design, which appear best suited to conciliate the filial gratitude of every member of the Church for her watchful care over the interests of the whole.

A leading feature in the design of the Church in Confirmation is manifestly to make the vows personal which were offered by substitutes or sureties in baptism. The privileges of baptism are of the highest character,—pardon of original sin, and the benefit of what Christ did and suffered, by being received into covenant with God through Him. These great privileges, the Church, in the name, by the authority, and on behalf of her Divine Head, communicates to every infant presented in her sanctuaries. In return, she requires a solemn pledge, on the part of the sponsors, that the children, so received into covenant by baptism, shall, on attaining a competent age, and after the instruction of the parochial minister, be brought to the Bishop for confirmation, in other words to take upon themselves, a solemn vow, promise and profession, which their godfathers and godmothers made for them in baptism. If the Church could, with certainty, anticipate a refusal on any of her children to "repent and believe" on their coming of age, there would be no question the blessing of baptism would not be given. (It is of importance to remember that in baptism a solemn covenant is entered into between God and the child, on His part, promises remission of sins, and all other benefits of Christianity. Our part in the covenant is "repentance whereby we forsake sin, and a new whereby we stedfastly believe the promises of God made to us in that sacrament.") The priest, in the name of the Eternal Trinity, pledges the fulfilment of the promise, and requires, on the part of the child, until he comes of age to make the vow upon himself, the solemn assurance of his sponsors, that he shall present himself before God and the congregation, and make a public confession of Christ and Him crucified. It is obvious from this view, (and it is as important, to believe it to be a correct one,) that the Church regards the blessings of baptism as some measure as conditional,—conditional, on our fulfilling the vow and promise made for us in baptism. The shield of Christ's body, which is His Church, again Divine wrath, is cast over us during the years of infancy and early youth: our profession of faith by our sureties in our name, can be available only up to the period when we can make that profession ourselves. The Church, therefore, requires that when we should, on attaining a fit age, assume the responsibility which our sureties have taken upon themselves in our name. And it should furnish matter for serious reflection, whether, by deliberately refusing to be confirmed, we do not virtually renounce the blessings of baptism, and throw ourselves back upon the uncovenanted mercies of God,—whether we do not in fact, annul the covenant. It is most certain that God is "the same yesterday, to-day and for ever." Hath He said it, and will He not perform His promise and covenant?—but if we refuse to put our seal to the covenant—if we refuse obedience to Christ's requisition to "repent and believe"—can we publicly to confess Him; can we regard the covenant as complete? Nay, can baptism be complete without Confirmation? Certainly not, as far as we are concerned. When brought as infants to baptism, we offer no opposition to

ception into the covenant of God's grace; the faith of the sponsors in particular, chiefly the faith of the whole Church is exercised, that during such unopposed years of infancy the blessings of the Covenant shall be ours. But if, when we are of age, we refuse to ratify the vows made in our name, what is this but a denial of baptism—a falling back from the state of salvation into which we were brought by baptism,—an actual renunciation of our Christian birth-right? Hence the Church has anxiety and solicitude that her children should early take upon themselves their baptismal vows, and thus complete the covenant then so solemnly and auspiciously entered. It may be possible, that, from circumstances, purely providential, we have been prevented making our public profession of “repentance towards God, and towards our Lord Jesus Christ,” in confirmation, and that, under these circumstances, we have drawn near with faith and taken the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to our comfort;—in this we have done right; and the Church has wisely made provision for such a case, in that she refuses that Holy Sacrament to those who are not confirmed, or *who are not ready and desirous so to be*. Whenever the opportunity occurs, no matter what our age may be, I conceive it to be our imperative duty to fulfil all righteousness, and cheerfully and unhesitatingly to lay ourselves before God, and the congregation, for the profession of our faith, in the prayer, and “laying on of hands” of Christ's chief pastor, that we may receive the fullness of His blessing. Beloved brethren, we desire you to walk, as in the commandments, so in all the ordinances of the Lord blameless.)

Another design of confirmation or “laying on of hands,” is *that a greater measure of the Holy Spirit may be imparted to disciples than already received in baptism*. On this view of the enlarged communications of the Holy Spirit must depend the ordinances, or means of grace, which Christ, or His Church, has appointed for the edification of the faithful; and it is simply because this view has been lost sight of, that the opponents of the rite of confirmation have fallen into error. It was, in truth, with some, that because the Holy Spirit is given in Baptism, therefore, a further or increased measure of His influence is not to be expected. If this reasoning were correct, then must every means of grace,—prayer, private, domestic, public,—reading the Sacred Scriptures, and the Supper of the Lord be superfluous. Why are all these means used? That the “man of God may be perfectly and abundantly furnished unto every good work.” The Apostle Peter reasoned not thus when he met Cornelius and his friends. Perceiving that, while preaching, the Holy Spirit had come upon them *before baptism*, he said, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” Can any one doubt that the believing recipient of baptism is made partaker of the Holy Ghost? Can any one “repent and believe,” the necessary qualifications for the gift of the Spirit, without the Holy Ghost? And why should we suppose that a yet greater measure of the Spirit may not be imparted to the true believer by prayer and the laying on of hands? We are persuaded, that every penitent and believing person may be regenerated, or born again, of water and of the Holy Ghost in the sacrament of baptism; and we believe, on the authority of Scripture, that the persons, so born again, may receive fresh, renewed, enlarged degrees of the Holy Spirit, by prayer and the laying on of hands; in order, that they may go on to perfection, that they may attain

measure of the *fullness of the stature of Christ.*”) To refuse or neglect this ordinance, wherever it may be had, argues an indifference to that growth in grace, conformity with the Divine image, through the influences of God’s Holy Spirit, which we ought unceasingly to pray. The design of confirmation or “laying on of hands” is, therefore, obviously to open all the channels, through which the grace of the Holy Spirit may be imparted, to strengthen us in our pilgrimage heavenward.

We proceed now to notice another part of the Church’s design in the ordinance of confirmation, viz., *to introduce her children into the privileges of full Church membership.* Before the period of partaking of the Lord’s Supper, it cannot be said that the disciple of Christ is in possession of all the privileges and blessings of the Covenant. Otherwise, we should charge Christ foolishly, for having instituted, in the most solemn manner, and immediately before His death, an ordinance, from the observance of which no benefit, no grace, no blessing could be derived. We believe, on the contrary, that they who penitently, humbly, and believingly receive the Lord’s Supper are brought into the highest, closest union with Christ,—that they are made one with Him and He with them,—that they dwell in Him and He in them.” Is it not a privilege most devoutly to be desired? Until we partake of it, we are yet, at the least, in a state of pupillage,—of childhood; we are yet ignorant of the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. The ordinance of Confirmation is designed as a special and most appropriate introduction to a participation in the Lord’s Supper. It must be allowed, that, worthily to receive the Body and Blood of Christ, a certain and serious preparation is necessary; the Church affords the means to attain the required meetness in Confirmation; in which, after due private instruction, the candidate makes a full and public profession of repentance and faith, and commends himself to the teaching and guidance of the good Spirit of God to uphold him in the path of duty, deliberately formed, and publicly confessed, to cleave henceforward fully to the Lord.

But again,—The Church evidently designs in confirmation *to present her children to God as a full and public profession of repentance and faith, and to enable them to overcome effectually, the dangers, the difficulties, and the temptations which, on entering their worldly career, they most assuredly will be exposed to.* Here is the parent whose breast throbs not with painful anxiety, when first a child leaves a father’s house to become an actor in the busy scenes of life? How fervent must be the prayer of a pious parent at such a moment,—“Lord preserve, Lord keep, Lord uphold thy Child, uphold him with the right hand of thy power. Suffer not the great evil of souls to triumph over him.” Oh, how important, invaluable beyond comparison, must be the possession of sound religious principles at this, the critical, period of life. One false step, one ungodly companion, one unhallowed habit, and a youth may be lost, ruined, undone;—reputation injured, health sapped, and soul perilled! Are these imaginary evils attendant upon a youth’s entrance into the world? Alas, they are real, substantial. The Church, as a mother and parent, watches, with earnest solicitude, over this period of her child’s pilgrimage. She comes with Divine authority into the domestic circle, and challenges the obedience of parents and sponsors to bring their baptized youth, through the ordinance of Confirmation, into closer communion with her Divine Master. Now it is, that un-

diligent and faithful instruction of the Parish priest, the youth of his charge ought to examine themselves whether they are in the faith;—now it is, the continued personal intercourse with the Minister, he is enabled to impress on the youthful mind those practical lessons of piety, to impart those views of the love of Christ Jesus,—to inspire those hopes of a blessed immortality which the Lord has promised to his true disciples,—to instil that confidence and trust in the goodness of the Saviour, the value of which, from ignorance or inattention, might have been despised. Is there a parent here, who would not desire that his child should be thus brought into confidential intercourse with his Minister, in order that the lessons already received at home, may be justified and confirmed by ministerial authority? Can we, dear brethren, be too anxious that our children should possess sound Christian principles, and exhibit, in their lives, consistent Christian practice? The Church designs that her children should be thus trained; and she continues the Apostolic ordinance of Confirmation.

And yet scriptural, wise, and parental as this design of the Church obviously is, her enemies of the Church fail not to revile the ordinance, as a mere useless ceremony, a lifeless form, nay, a ridiculous superstition. What is the good of it, they say,—what possible spiritual advantage can a youth derive from the laying on of the Bishop's hands? If such objections could be considered of the slightest weight by reflecting persons, then must the whole fabric of Christ's Church speedily go to utter ruin. Wonder not that the *ordinances* of Christ are now reviled; the *teaching of the Gospel* by "men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," is considered, by the majority of their hearers, as *foolishness*. Let it be sufficient for us to know, that the ordinance of "laying on of hands" is scriptural, apostolic, and that, in all ages of God's Church, the ministers of religion were appointed to bless the people.

But we observe further, that in the ordinance of Confirmation the Bishop is not the only actor,—the Congregation are also deeply interested, and should take a lively and zealous part. They are called on to assist in humble, fervent prayer, that the Holy Spirit may descend into the hearts of the Candidates, while the Bishop is laying on his hands. Are we not all interested in the future character of our youth? Should we not desire, and pray, that they may become pious and consistent in the future? Our youth, if pious, must become the leaven of society,—the very salt of the earth. Who can estimate the influence which even a very few pious young men must have upon the morals, aye, upon the happiness, the well being, the Community in which they reside? They must prove a blessing to a neighbourhood; their light will shine,—a light to guide the wavering,—a light to warn the fellow pilgrims from the error of their way. For instance, must not the old members of a Congregation feel the sting of conscience, when they see the young coming to the table of their common Lord, while they themselves are turning away? It is to bring the youth of her communion to this holy, unostentatious habitude, that the Church continues the apostolic ordinance of Confirmation. And is it really anything so very vain, and empty, and absurd in a minister meeting the youth of his flock frequently, in private conference, for a considerable period

examining them, and instructing them, and exhorting, and animating, and urging them to cleave to their God and Saviour? And, when so prepared, and engaged, is it really absurd or vain that the youth of the flock should appear in public congregation, and solemnly, and devoutly present their bodies, souls, and "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is their reasonable?" If rightly understood and undertaken, is not such an ordinance calculated to make the deepest, most lasting, impression upon the youthful mind? And is it that a whole congregation should assemble together to witness this voluntary dedication of their own youth to the Saviour of the world?—that they should join in prayer, that the vows of baptism, now so solemnly renewed in their own presence, may be faithfully and religiously kept? Is there a heart, touched with the love of God and man, which could assist unmoved in such a ceremony? And is it really that the chief pastor or bishop should appear in the midst of the flock, and bestow prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit lay his hands on all, in hope and faith, and the blessing of the Eternal Trinity shall indeed rest upon them?

It is further objected by some, that the rite of Confirmation or "laying on of hands," as observed in the Church of England, is not identical with that of the Apostles, or of the Primitive Church, and herein especially, that the "laying on of hands" in Sacred Scriptures, and in the Primitive Church, may be supposed to have been performed soon, if not immediately, after the sacrament of baptism. Admitting that the apostolical "laying on of hands" occurred *soon* after baptism, and that, in the Primitive Church, it happened, in many instances, *immediately* after, we say,—that Confirmation, or "laying on of hands" in the Church of England is identical with the primitive, as circumstances can possibly admit. And first, with respect to adults, we observe, that the identity of the ordinance is perfect. In the order of baptism for adults, persons it is distinctly stated "It is expedient that every person thus baptized be confirmed by the Bishop *so soon* after his baptism as conveniently may be, that he may be admitted to the Holy Communion." Can the shadow of a doubt be entertained that the Church of England requires, in perfect accordance with the primitive model, the Confirmation of adults, as soon after baptism as the opportunity presents itself, that is, as soon as the chief pastor or bishop visits the parish for the purpose? This cannot be gainsaid. The disciples in Samaria waited for the Apostolic visit from Jerusalem. At first sight, the difficulty, with respect to persons baptized in their infancy, may appear greater than in the case of adults. A little reflection will, however, shew that the difficulty is only apparent, and not real. It will be allowed, that a public profession of repentance and faith is essentially necessary to baptism, and also to "laying on of hands." In baptism, an infant cannot make this public profession in his own person; he is the unopposing recipient of the grace of baptism, and must be considered as a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven, until he attain the years of discretion, when the baptismal vows must become personal. If we do not believe that an infant is a partaker of the blessings of the New Covenant, and consequently a temple of the Holy Ghost in baptism, then do we throw him out of the pale of mercy, and make baptism an useless ceremony,—it is a mockery of the faith of the parents and the church,—a supposition too fearful to be entertained. Now at what period should

we consider a youth so baptized in his infancy, capable of discerning between evil and the good,—of coming to a deliberate choice of God as his Saviour, of making a public profession of faith and repentance? As a general rule may he lay precisely at that age when the Church requires that he should come to the altar to be confirmed? And if so, we assert, without fear of contradiction, that the ordinance of “laying on of hands” in the Church of England is perfectly and entirely in accordance with that of the Apostolic, and of the Primitive Church. It follows immediately after the ratification of the baptismal vows, as a reference to the service itself will show. The solemn question is thus put by the Bishop to every baptized person

“Do you in the presence of God and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your baptism, ratifying and confirming the same in your own person, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe and do, all those things which your godfathers and godmothers then undertook for you?”

Each candidate answers, I do.

Immediately upon this, a prayer is made by the Bishop and the whole congregation for the Holy Spirit, and then succeeds “the laying on of hands.”

From this simple statement it will appear clear, that the Confirmation service of the Church of England is precisely the same, with “the laying on of hands” of the Apostolic, and primitive Church, as far as circumstances will permit, as well as in the case of those who were baptized in their infancy, as in that of adults.

Upon the whole then we say, let the scoffer and the infidel revile; the simple Churchman will bless his God that such an ordinance exists, and will fearlessly say that all, who are partakers of it, may adorn the doctrine of their Saviour with godliness and godliness of living.

Having thus shown the design of the Church in this ordinance of Confirmation, let us take those views *personal*, which were offered by substitutes or sureties in Baptism:—to pray for a greater measure of the Holy Spirit upon the baptized; to introduce the youth of the flock into full churchmembership; and to present them the best manner (under God) for encountering prudently, and overcoming effectually, the difficulties of their pilgrimage;—we shall briefly conclude with a few suggestions on the preparation necessary to a due participation in the Holy ordinance of Confirmation. In the “laying on of hands” prayer is made by the Bishop and congregation for the gift of the Holy Ghost, so let each candidate know that so high a privilege must be sought in private, solemn, fervent prayer. No approach to the majesty of Heaven can be acceptable, except as secured by the intercession of the Eternal Spirit; no prayer can be made, except under his divine teaching; and as we ask for that teaching and for these influences, we have no warrant to believe they will be given; I earnestly entreat, therefore, each and every candidate to continue continually for divine teaching and guidance, that you may have the hearing ear and the understanding heart,—that you may believe that it is a real blessing you

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to obtain, and not a mere form that you are about to pass through: enter c
 duty before you, in simplicity and sincerity of heart, persuaded that Christ w
 require the discharge of a duty, for the faithful performance of which he does u
 an abundant blessing. You may not understand *now*, but follow in the path
 obedience, and even your present comparative darkness shall become light
 ord. Finally, to prayer you must add the sincere resolution, by God's help,
 henceforward in all his holy ways; you must seek at once for a meetness
 ke of the Supper of the Lord, so that, having publicly taken upon yourselves th
 made for you in baptism, you may forthwith draw near with faith to the sea
 rist's body and blood, whereby your souls may be strengthened and refreshe
 lieve and to do all the good pleasure of your Saviour. I publicly declare th
 Minister, your Church, and your Saviour expect that the ratification of you
 mal vows in Confirmation will be followed, as soon as the opportunity presen
 by your partaking of the Holy Communion of the Lord's Supper. All I ask
 Candidates at present is a full acquaintance with the Catechism. During th
 nt week I shall notify the several candidates of the time and place of our fir
 ng.

e have now been apprized of the authority upon which the ordinance of Con
 tion rests--the Sacred Scriptures,--the primitive Church,--and your own; y
 the design of the Church in its use; and the preparation necessary for a d
 icipation in the holy ordinance. It remains for me to commend the seed th
 to Him, who can alone give the increase, and may that increase be to the prai
 s great name. AMEN.

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